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UNCLAS ABUJA 001572

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INL AND AF

ROME FOR DEA - R.FIANO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INCREASED DRUG SEIZURES AT LAGOS AIRPORT

1. Since the beginning of April 2002, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) unit at Lagos' Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos has reported seizures of cocaine and heroin amounting to 40 kilograms. All of these narcotics shipments were either entering Nigeria from known source areas or departing for consumer countries.

2. The seizures include:

a) April 7: The seizure of 820 grams of white heroin carried internally by a courier arriving in Lagos from Lahore, Pakistan via Kenyan Airways (transiting Nairobi).

b) April 12: The seizure of 2.5 kilograms of white heroin carried in hand luggage by a courier attempting to board a Lufthansa flight for Frankfurt (onward destination, if any, unknown).

c) April 20: 29 kilograms of brown heroin (heroin #3) and 900 grams of white heroin found in unclaimed baggage arriving from Bombay on Ethiopian Airways (transiting Addis Ababa)

d) May 3: 1.083 kilograms of white heroin carried internally by a courier attempting to board an Air France flight for onward connection to Newark, New Jersey.

e) May 7: 5.1 kilograms of cocaine carried concealed in clothing (body wrap) by a courier attempting to board a British Airways flight to London.

3. Comment: DEA's close collaboration with the NDLEA unit at MMIA, and INL assistance to the same unit, have led to new strategies to detect and interdict heroin and cocaine transiting Lagos; these seizures indicate that this cooperation is paying off. These successes also underscore the continued use of Nigeria as a transit area for South Asian heroin bound for consumer markets in the U.S. and Europe.  
JETER